

MEDICAL LIBRARIES.

"For Libraries are the standing armies of civilization."—O. W. Holmes.

Devoted to the Interests of Medical Libraries, Bibliography and Letters.

Issued Quarterly.

Edited and Published by

Annual Subscription, \$1.00

C. D. SPIVAK, M.D.,

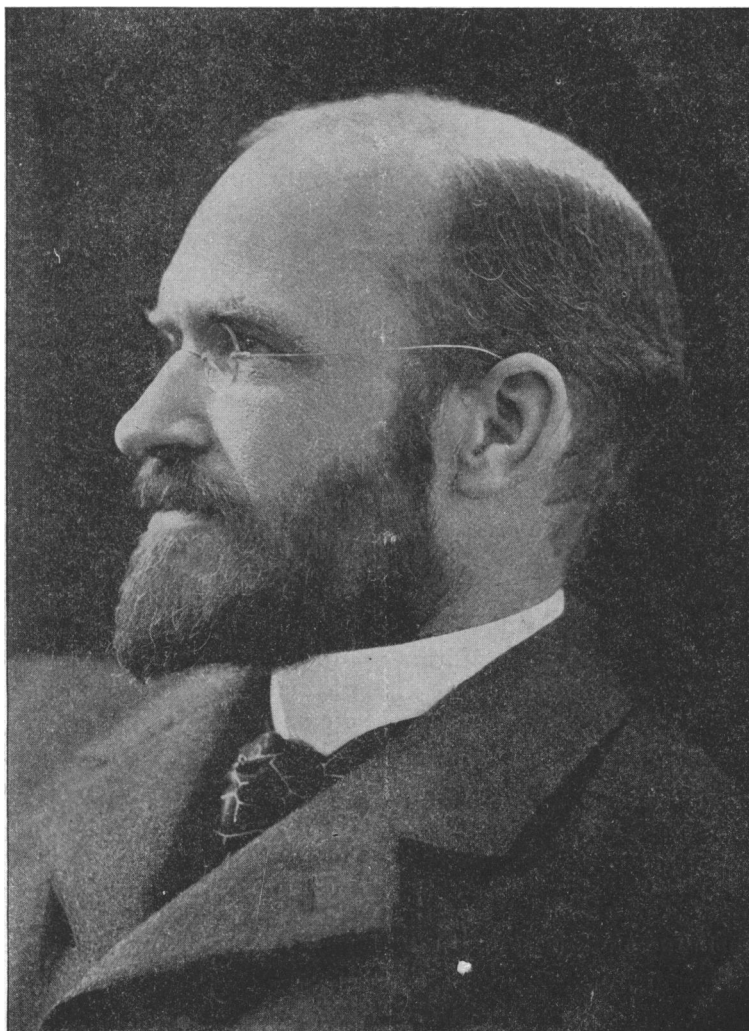
538 Twelfth Street., Denver, Colorado, U. S. A.

Entered at Denver Postoffice as Second-Class Matter.

VOLUME V.

MARCH, 1902.

No. 1



SYMPOSIUM NUMBER, I.

MELVIL DEWEY,

DIRECTOR NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY, ALBANY, N. Y.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENTS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES—A SYMPOSIUM.

Editor Medical Libraries:

"Our librarian is not specially given to the advancement of the medical department; but, I think that is largely due to the fact that he has had an over conservative board for so many years; and, also to the fact that he is hardly in line with the progress of medical things in general; a little education along this line might be profitable, and that is one reason why I wish this publication to come regularly to the library. He will probably see the arguments in them on such class libraries, and possibly may begin to be somewhat of an enthusiast in that line."

In response to many letters and inquiries of which the above is a sample, we have opened the pages of MEDICAL LIBRARIES for a free expression of opinion on the subject of medical departments in public libraries. It must not be ascribed to the mental bent of the editor that the symposium as presented in this issue is rather a consensus of opinion on the affirmative side. It so happened that all the responses received to our invitations sent to about fifty librarians to participate in the symposium came from those who favor the establishment and maintenance of medical departments in public libraries. We will hope that this first installment of the symposium, representing, as it does, the

opinions held by eminent librarians will elicit an expression of opinion from those who hold different views on the subject.

MELVIL DEWEY,

Director New York State Library, Albany,
New York.

The proper conception of the State Library is that it is for *all* citizens of the state. Because of courts, legislature and public offices is the first claim that doubtless such a library is strong in law. Obviously it should be strong also in local history and everything pertaining specially to the state. In the great range of other subjects, medicine would come next because it is a matter of so practical interest to every citizen of the state. Medical books and magazines are many and costly. Very few physicians can afford to buy or can otherwise get access to all they would like to see. Any taxpayer is liable to have in his own family a case where a life might be saved through the facilities of a medical library at the service of his family physician. Therefore I rank medicine next after law among the fields that a State Library should cover for the benefit of the entire community.

Some will object to all this and talk about paternalism and new ideas and probably will make up wry faces and speak of fads and theories. There never has been

any advance in this world worth regarding that would not be objected to by some one. Those who have done things learned long ago to spend their strength doing them rather than to waste in arguing with persons constitutionally bound to be opposing something. A brake at the end of a train is desirable though hardly as useful as the engine in front. For the past 20 years I have studied closely this question of extending the field of state and other libraries. This study leaves me not the slightest doubt that the next few years are to be largely marked in applying the traveling library idea much more widely than hitherto. We must reach individual homes where the best books are not now available. The express companies have already made liberal concessions, first books for the blind and then for all our traveling libraries and books. They will do still more when they understand how much good can be accomplished in this way. The postoffice can not much longer refuse the reasonable request that the best books from carefully selected libraries owned and carried on by the public shall be passed through the public mails at least as cheaply as the "yellow" journals privately carried on from the most sordid motives and by almost universal consent one of the gravest of intellectual and moral evils. To combat this is the particular province of the public library.

The State Library is the only one that in most cases can possibly do work, which is for the whole state and should therefore be paid for by the state. In the special application to medicine the State Library will usually have to do the work unless there is a great medical library that will undertake it.

The question may be summed up by saying that the supply of books from a central plant is coming just as surely as the supply of electricity, because the needed work is done better and more cheap in that way. Croaking and theorizing will make no difference. The hard sense of the American people will lead them to insist on getting the best results in the cheapest way in spite of any theories. I therefore say that as medical books should be available to every physician in the state and as they can be furnished cheaper and better from a central plant, that the State Library is the proper place for a medical department from which books can be borrowed without charge, except for transportation, by every licensed physician in the state.

A. H. CHASE,

Librarian State Library, Concord, N. H.

The old conception of a State Library was that it should be a law library only, and for the benefit of the legal profession alone. One of the first things that impressed me when I was appointed state librarian of this state was that that theory was not in any sense fair to

the citizens of our state who paid taxes for support of the library, that it should not be used solely for the benefit of any one profession, or any one class of people in the state, that it should be rather, a universal reference library, devoted to all professions and all interests, to the medical and religious professions, the agricultural interests, the scientific interests; the educational interests, and so far as possible cover the whole field of reference work. Of course, this is a very broad field, and the small amount that we have to expend for books in any one year makes it impossible for us to cover it in a complete manner, but we are, so far as possible, paying attention to each subject and trying to make a good foundation for it, so that it may eventually become as valuable as our legal department now is.

In the medical department we now have about 5,000 volumes where we had none six years ago.

All the books in the miscellaneous department of our library, including the medical department, are at the service of every citizen in the state. All that citizen has to do is to go to the public library of his town and make application for the book. That library then sends and obtains the book from us and loans it out, as though it were the book of that library, for two weeks, subject to their rules. When the two weeks are up, the book is returned to us. The only

expense attending that transaction is the payment of the express or mail charges both ways, which, as we figure it, amounts to about 28 to 30 cents on the average book.

ANNE BURTON JEFFERS,

Librarian Maryland State Library, Annapolis, Md.

I agree fully with the conclusions of Mr. Chase. A new building is to be erected here, partly for our accommodation, and if sufficient space and facilities are granted us, we will be glad to follow out your suggestion.

SALOME CUTLER FAIRCHILD,

Vice-Director Library School, Albany, N.Y.

I am becoming more and more thoroughly convinced that it is the function of the public library to see to it that adequate provision is made somewhere in the city for supplying the entire medical profession of a city with library facilities, both books and periodicals. A community suffers unless physicians are thus adequately equipped. In some cities this is well done by special medical libraries supported by the profession. In any city where that is not done, or where the arrangements are such that the younger and poorer members of the profession can not afford to take advantage of it, the public library should supply the need. I was gratified to find that so able a librarian and medical authority as Dr. Billings holds practically the same opinion.

GEO. EDWARD REED,
 Librarian Pennsylvania State Library,
 Harrisburg, Pa.

I am heartily in favor of developing a medical department in connection with State Libraries. In my judgment this department is of the utmost importance. In the Penesylvania State Library in the past not very much attention has been paid to this, but I shall try to make the Medical Department more conspicuous in the future.

C. HENRI LEONARD, M. D.,
 President Public Library Commission,
 Detroit, Mich.

I have been doing what I could towards keeping up and enlarging the Medical Department in our Public Library. I am somewhat handicapped, having a board that does not think that there should be class libraries formed in public institutions of this sort. They take the ground that they should not favor one science above another, that all of the others should come in for equal favors. I argue against this by saying that the medical library helps rich and poor alike. The young, middle-aged, childhood, and the aged are all benefited by having a large medical library at hand for instant consultation by any of our practitioners of medicine. In this way a medical library is vastly different from a law one, where only two or three parties can be directly interested in the outcome of a single case. In a measure my work has been successful; but not to that degree that I deem worthy

of so large a city as ours in this department. We have recently secured a gift from Andrew Carnegie of \$750,000 for the building of a large central library and five branches, and I hope that when these are completed to see ensconced within its walls a very much larger medical department than we now have.

C. B. GALBREATH,
 Librarian Ohio State Library, Columbus,
 Ohio.

In my last annual report I have advocated departmental libraries for the different professions and have mentioned specifically the medical profession. With a new library building, which we hope to have in the course of a few years, we can satisfactorily carry out the plan set forth in my report. We already have some medical books and are making an effort to collect the literature of your profession that pertains especially to our own state.

HENRY C. BUCHANAN,
 Librarian New Jersey State Library,
 Trenton, N. J.

An attempt was made several years ago to organize a basis for a Medical Library in connection with the State Library, but the physicians, I am told, took little interest in the movement.

It seems to me that before any progress can be made, they must show some interest, particularly as the present appropriation for the purchase of books is comparatively small, and at least two-

thirds of it is required to keep up the law library.

It may be that the New Jersey State Medical Society will become interested after a time, as it is now sending to the State Library (for safe keeping only) the proceedings of the various state medical societies received in exchange.

Of course we already have a collection of medical reference books, and there is no doubt that more attention would be given to that department if there was any demand or interest on the part of those who should take the initiative. Personally, I think there should be a good medical library here, just as there is a fine law library, but the lawyers are, or seem to be, more progressive in the way of making their wants known.

If you can do anything to stir

up the New Jersey doctors you will be doing them a service.

L. D. CARVER,

Librarian Maine State Library, Augusta,
Maine.

It is the purpose of this library to have every branch of human knowledge represented by the best and most exhaustive works. The original idea that a state library was simply the depository of law books and public documents is slowly but surely passing away. The literary and historical side has engaged our attention for the last ten years. The industrial, sociological and scientific side now comes to the front. We are trying to make a department for all and each of these, realizing that our library must minister to the wants of all the people equally.

REPRINTS—SUGGESTIONS TO MEDICAL WRITERS.

By J. MADISON TAYLOR, M. D., Philadelphia.

Reprints of medical papers should be made to serve better uses than they commonly do.

For one thing, they could easily become of greater value to both writer and recipient had they greater uniformity of size of sheet by which filing could be more comfortably effected.

My specific suggestion is that authors should select a certain number of libraries, local and general, and always send a copy, preferably in duplicate, of every paper or brochure to each so that they may be filed (1) under the head of Author, and (2) under the head of Subject. In this way all the contributions of an author could be found grouped together—a great convenience to the student.

One other hint I have offered to several hospitals but so far as I know not acted upon. A copy of a reprint should be placed on file at the hospital from which clinical material has been obtained. This would be a great convenience to the student searching the notes, who would then find the work which had been done by his predecessor in any line of search. Thus no doubts would obtain as to whether the cases had been already used and how.

Again the notes of hospitals, so far as they are common property of staff or writers, should be marked in some way as clearly as possible by name, or initials of the writer of papers or reference made to the article and thus avoid duplicate use.